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## CORRESPONDENCE.

To return to the theme of definition (see *Brief Mention* in vol. 36, 242) I offer the following criticism of Walde's lexicon. In IF. 26, 35 I had explained *vērātrum*, the Latin name of the hellebore, as a complex of a neuter nominative *vēr[d]* (: IE. *wṛd* in Gothic *waurts*; cf. *vṛād-* in Lat. *rādx*) + *ātrum* (black), and not without mention of the Greek name *μελαμπόδιον*. All of this is magnificently disposed of by Walde (s. v.) in the sweeping word *falsch*. Indeed! Yet I did cite *μελαμπόδιον*, without taking the trouble (alas!) to demonstrate that *μελαμπόδιον* meant blackroot. Whoever doubts the metaphor (root = foot) should consider Latin *pedes betacei* (=beetroots); and we can find an excellent illustration of the characteristic black root-stock (rhizome, pedicule) of the hellebore in the Encyclopedia Britannica. Since writing first on *veratrum* I have found in Cato (r. r. 115) that the plant, with a fine tautology avoided in Pliny (n. h. 15, 47 sq.), was expressly called *veratrum atrum*. For the postponement of the adjective in the complex further cf. Lat. *holusātrum* and French *pi-ver*. Noun complexes of a like sort are found in Spanish *avestruz* (i. e., *avis struthio*) and in Greek *μυ-γαλή* (mouse-weasel, i. e. shrew mouse). In English *smallage* we have a plant name, the complex of adj. *small* and French *ache* (= Lat. *apium*). To the entirely simple and direct analysis of *ver-atrum* as blackroot, Walde opposes the definition <herba per sternutationem> verum (i. e., bonum omen!) faciens, and makes it an instrument noun to *verare* (to speak the truth). In *vēr[d]a-trum d* may be dispensed with altogether in favor of *wēr* from a root *wer* (to twist, in Lat. *ver-t-o*), extended in Lat. *rādx* to *wṛād* (not from *wer*, to raise oneself, pace Boisacq, p. 832). Pliny's Melampus is a mere aetiology to account for *melampodion*.

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